



NEWS ROUNDUP

14 AUGUST 2023 [08:30 am]

- Can reforestation efforts reverse the damage done in the Philippines?
- UAE COP28 president-designate challenges rich nations to 'show the money' to combat climate change
- Climate legal cases double in five years
- Intervene in ICJ climate change case, PH gov't urged
- DA reiterates call for climate-proof rice farming
- Tree planting rule in building permits to mitigate climate change – Romualdez
- Climate crisis changes decisions – study
- Marcos: Work with youth for 'greener' future
- Intervene in International Court of Justice climate change case, government urged
- [Opinion] AI-aided forecasting

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- UNDP, DENR boost EPR drive
- Wealthy nations must honor climate financing commitments: CCC

ECO BUSINESS

[Can reforestation efforts reverse the damage done in the Philippines?](#)

By: Jennee Rubrico

More needs to be done to prevent further deforestation within the Philippines. The country, which hosts two-thirds of the planet's biodiversity and up to four-fifths of its flora and fauna, is fighting an uphill battle to preserve its wildlife. The nation is currently losing an estimated 47,000 hectares of rainforest every year and has lost around 60 per cent of its forest cover in the last 80 years.

KHALEEJ TIMES

[UAE COP28 president-designate challenges rich nations to 'show the money' to combat climate change](#)

By: Angel Tesorero

COP28 president-designate Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber has reiterated his call to donor countries to 'show the money' with regards to the long overdue \$100 billion finance pledge to combat climate change.

MANILA STANDARD

[Climate legal cases double in five years](#)

The total number of climate change court cases has more than doubled since 2017 and is growing worldwide.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Intervene in ICJ climate change case, PH gov't urged](#)

By: Tina G. Santos

Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Marvic Leonen has called on the Philippine government to get involved in the pending International Court of Justice (ICJ) case on climate change.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[DA reiterates call for climate-proof rice farming](#)

By: Sarwell Meniano

The Department of Agriculture (DA) regional office here has reiterated its call to rice farmers in Eastern Visayas to adapt to climate-resilient practices to solve output drop.

POLITIKO

[Tree planting rule in building permits to mitigate climate change – Romualdez](#)

By: Billy Begas

The House of Representatives has approved on third and final reading a measure that would require a tree planting plan for residential, commercial, industrial, and public building development projects.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Climate crisis changes decisions – study](#)

A recent global study found 91 percent of parents are concerned about the climate crisis, leading to changes that reshape their lives and purchasing habits. More than half (53 percent) say it has impacted their perspective on having more children. The research also found many parents favor companies that are taking action to address climate change and expect businesses to lead on the issue. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of parents prefer products that are sustainably sourced, and 60 percent say sustainable company practices play a large part in their purchasing habits.

[Marcos: Work with youth for 'greener' future](#)

By: Catherine S. Valente and Red Mendoza

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is urging Filipinos to work with the country's youth to secure a "greener future" for the Philippines, recognizing the role of the young generation in achieving sustainable development.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Intervene in International Court of Justice climate change case, government urged](#)

By: Neil Jayson Servallos

Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Marvic Leonen is calling on the government to intervene in the climate change case lodged before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), stressing the need to take action for communities in the country continuously facing the brunt of the climate crisis.

[\[Opinion\] AI-aided forecasting](#)

By: Marichu A. Villanueva

A geologist by training, Department of Science and Technology (DOST) head Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. supports the policy decision of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. (PBBM) to construct water-impounding structures as a science-based solution to flooding and as a climate change adaptation measure. In particular, Solidum believes the proposed water-impounding project at the Candaba swamp in Pampanga could mitigate the severe flooding and become an irrigation source in Central Luzon.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

THE MANILA TIMES

[UNDP, DENR boost EPR drive](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) teamed-up with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for a nationwide campaign that will drive the recovery of waste materials and prevent leakage of waste into the environment. The campaign is in line with the implementation of Republic Act (RA) 11898, otherwise known as the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022.

POLITIKO

[Wealthy nations must honor climate financing commitments: CCC](#)

By: Prince Golez

Developed countries should honor their climate finance promise, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ECO BUSINESS

Can reforestation efforts reverse the damage done in the Philippines?

By: Jennee Rubrico

More needs to be done to prevent further deforestation within the Philippines. The country, which hosts two-thirds of the planet's biodiversity and up to four-fifths of its flora and fauna, is fighting an uphill battle to preserve its wildlife. The nation is currently losing an estimated 47,000 hectares of rainforest every year and has lost around 60 per cent of its forest cover in the last 80 years.

While the Philippines is an agricultural country with a land area of around 30 million hectares, only around 24.1 per cent of its land area remained forested as of 2020.

The country is affected by an average of 20 major storms a year as it sits within the typhoon belt, an area in the western Pacific Ocean where nearly one-third of the world's tropical cyclones form. This, combined with current deforestation rates, has resulted in soil erosion, landslides, flash floods, food and water insecurity, and an insecure water supply, and has led to the displacement of indigenous tribes.

In 2019, the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) classified 55 mammals, 184 birds, 53 reptiles, 30 amphibians, and 784 invertebrates as threatened species.

"If the forests in which these species reside are cleared, their only habitat, including their food sources and environment needed to reproduce, will be destroyed," Anna Varona, chief operating officer of the Haribon Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources, told Eco-Business. "Consequently, there is a high probability that these unique species may vanish or become extinct."

Sources of destruction

Much of the country's forest loss stemmed from indiscriminate logging operations from 1935 to 1991. Agricultural expansion, mining, urbanisation, and forest conversion into resorts, roads, and dams have also contributed to forest loss over the years, Varona noted.

Climate-induced extreme weather events, such as Typhoon Haiyan – which not only took more than 6,000 lives but also decimated 86 per cent of the mangrove forests in eastern Philippines in 2013 – are also exacerbating forest degradation.

Meanwhile, the country's burgeoning population of more than 110 million people has led to an increased demand for goods and services from forest ecosystems.

“With a growing population there is increasing pressure from different clients and customers within the forestry sector to meet all or most of the domestic needs for wood, fuelwood, major and minor forest products, and other forest ecosystem-related goods and services,” according to the Philippine Master Plan for Climate Resilient Forestry Development.

The plan, formulated in 1990, came after a government ban on log and lumber exports a year prior to striking a better balance between the development of forest-based industries and the conservation of forest ecosystems. The policy was updated in 2003 when major programmes failed and revamped again in 2013 to factor in the impact of climate change on forestry.

Preservation efforts

In 2011, two major forest management-related policy changes were issued. One was a moratorium on the cutting and harvesting of trees in natural forests and the establishment of an Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force.

The second was the National Greening Program (NGP), a campaign to plant 1.5 billion trees on 1.5 million hectares between 2011 and 2016. This was later extended to 2028, with coverage expanded to include 7.1 million hectares of unproductive, denuded and degraded forests. Around 1.83 billion seedlings have been planted on 2.18 million hectares of land through the NGP as of 2022.

The interventions have led to modest gains: data from the Food and Agriculture Organization show that the Philippines recorded a 0.5 per cent increase in forest cover between 2010 and 2020. On average, 34,900 hectares of forest cover were added each year.

Despite the reported increase in forest cover, Varona cautioned that the planting of exotic trees “does not promote Philippine biodiversity.”

“I believe the focus should be on native tree species that support the country’s unique ecosystem. By prioritising indigenous trees and considering their ecological significance, reforestation efforts can better preserve and restore the country’s rich biodiversity while addressing deforestation concerns,” she said.

Sowing seeds; growing trees

The need to preserve indigenous trees is driving other reforestation efforts in the Philippines such as BINHI, the greening project of Energy Development Corporation (EDC), the world’s largest vertically integrated geothermal power producer in the world.

Geothermal power, which is harnessed from heat inside the earth, is considered a renewable and sustainable source of energy. EDC is owned by First Gen Corporation, also a Philippines-based independent power producer.

With 47 per cent of the country's indigenous trees threatened with extinction, BINHI, a Tagalog term for "seedling," was established in 2008 to rescue, preserve and propagate native species.

The programme also conducts tree population surveys to determine their numbers and partners with stakeholders to protect forests. To date, the project has assessed and updated the conservation status of 1,470 tree species through the Botanic Garden Conservation International (BGCI) for the Global Tree Assessment, an initiative to conduct research and compile extinction risk information on all tree species worldwide, of which EDC BINHI is the sole Philippine partner. Of these, EDC has identified a total of 145 as priority species.

The survey helps the team to identify which tree species to focus on reforesting and also sheds light on species that were believed to be disappearing. For example, tree species such as the red lauan (*Shorea negrosensis*), a large evergreen tree that had only been found in Negros in the Visayas, and a plant species endemic to the Philippines locally referred to as Mapilig (*Xanthostemon bracteatus*), which had only been found in Camarines Norte in Luzon, were discovered in several other places around the country.

The team also identified dwindling tree varieties, including one species of tropical hardwood tree known locally as kaladis narig (*Vatica elliptica*). "We only found two trees standing in 2016. But through our partnership with the Provincial Government of Zamboanga Sibugay and the DENR, we found a total of 11 trees, which had already borne fruit during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Roniño Gibe, EDC's BINHI program head.

BINHI also plants trees outside their natural habitat for the purpose of nurturing them into mother trees that will produce viable seeds in the coming years. It plans to begin in-situ conservation this year, where species are planted in their natural habitats.

While it will be several years before the Philippines undoes the damage its forests have sustained, reforestation efforts are hoping to protect and preserve what is left and find new ways of repopulating barren areas.

As a result of the BINHI's initiatives, 10 of the 145 species that were previously on EDC's priority list have been removed, while 21 were downgraded from their "critically endangered" classification, according to Gibe.

Allan Barcena, assistant vice president and head of Corporate Relations and Communications at EDC, said the programme, which marks its 15th anniversary this year, will require the help of local communities and governments to continue flourishing.

This, Barcena concluded, will also ensure that EDC is able to continue its operations as a renewable energy producer.

“Few understand that there are tree species on the brink of extinction. We are happy that the local governments are beginning to realise that we have this heritage, and a part of our history, to protect,” he said. “To ensure that the business is sustainable, we need to restore the forests and partner with the communities within them.”

The Energy Development Corporation is hosting the Biodiversity Conservation Society of the Philippines in its 31st Annual Philippine Biodiversity Symposium on 22-25 August 2023 in Sorsogon City. [Click here to register for the event.](#)

KHALEEJ TIMES

[UAE COP28 president-designate challenges rich nations to 'show the money' to combat climate change](#)

By: Angel Tesorero

COP28 president-designate Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber has reiterated his call to donor countries to 'show the money' with regards to the long overdue \$100 billion finance pledge to combat climate change

Al Jaber, who is also the UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, made the call during his recent visit to Barbados to meet with Prime Minister Mia Motley and address the leaders of Caribbean Community.

Al Jaber said, "The peoples of the Caribbean have been on the front lines of climate change for longer than most. They have been facing some of the harshest climate impacts. And in a very real sense, their experience represents an early warning system for the rest of the world."

"As a first step, I have called on donor countries to 'show me the money', when it comes to the long overdue \$100 billion finance pledge," underscored Al Jaber.

"I am also calling for deep, system-wide reform of IFIs (International Financial Institutions) and MDBs (Multilateral Development Banks) to make them more responsive to the climate and development needs of the 21st century," he added.

"In short, all forms of finance must be more available, more accessible, and more affordable," Al Jaber pointed out.

Falling short

During COP15 in 2009, developed countries committed to a collective goal of mobilising \$100 billion per year by 2020 to financially support developing countries cut their emissions and adapt to climate impacts.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been measuring progress towards this goal and reported in 2020 that rich nations mobilised only \$83.3 billion of climate finance, \$16.7 billion short of the goal.

Fixing climate finance

Al Jaber highlighted the critical role climate finance will play in the global energy transition. He said 'fixing climate finance' is one of four of key 'Action Plan' for COP28, alongside 'focus on people', 'lives and livelihoods' and underpinning everything with 'full inclusivity'.

“We all know that the cost of capital has slowed the adoption of renewable energy in this region, alongside many other climate vulnerable regions of the world. That is why addressing the climate finance gap is so important and why I have made it a key priority for COP28,” Al Jaber explained.

“I am calling on all parties to double adaptation finance by 2025 and ensure that a substantial portion of all climate finance goes to adaptation in the future,” he continued.

Milestone moment

The UAE will host COP28 or the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from November 30 to December 12 this year at Expo City Dubai.

COP28 UAE is hailed as a milestone moment when the world will take stock of its progress on the Paris Agreement signed on April 22, 2016 that set the goal to keep the rise in mean global temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and preferably limit the increase to 1.5°C to substantially reduce the effects of climate change.

The upcoming climate conference in Dubai will provide a comprehensive assessment of progress since adopting the Paris Agreement. It will also provide measures that are needed to be put in place to bridge the gaps in addressing climate change.

MANILA STANDARD

Climate legal cases double in five years

The total number of climate change court cases has more than doubled since 2017 and is growing worldwide.

These findings, published last week by the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University, show that climate litigation is becoming an integral part of securing climate action and justice.

The report, *Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023 Status Review*, is based on a review of cases focused on climate change law, policy or science collected up to 31 December 31, 2022 by the Sabin Center's US and Global Climate Change Litigation Databases. It is published a day ahead of the first anniversary of the UN General Assembly's declaration of access to a clean and healthy environment as a universal human right.

"Climate policies are far behind what is needed to keep global temperatures below the 1.5°C threshold, with extreme weather events and searing heat already baking our planet," said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP.

"People are increasingly turning to courts to combat the climate crisis, holding governments and the private sector accountable and making litigation a key mechanism for securing climate action and promoting climate justice."

The report provides an overview of key climate litigation cases from the past two years, including historic breakthroughs. As climate litigation increases in frequency and volume, the body of legal precedent grows, forming an increasingly well-defined field of law.

The total number of climate change cases has more than doubled since a first report on the issue, from 884 in 2017 to 2,180 in 2022. While most cases have been brought in the US, climate litigation is taking root all over the world, with about 17 percent of cases now being reported in developing countries, including Small Island Developing States.

These legal actions were brought in 65 bodies worldwide: in international, regional, and national courts, tribunals, quasi-judicial bodies, and other adjudicatory bodies, including special procedures of the UN and arbitration tribunals.

"There is a distressingly growing gap between the level of greenhouse gas reductions the world needs to achieve in order to meet its temperature targets, and the actions that governments are actually taking to lower emissions. This inevitably will lead more people to resort to the courts. This report will be an invaluable resource for everyone

who wants to achieve the best possible outcome in judicial forums, and to understand what is and is not possible there,” said Michael Gerrard, Sabin Center’s Faculty Director.

The report demonstrates how the voices of vulnerable groups are being heard globally: 34 cases have been brought by and on behalf of children and youth under 25 years old, including by girls as young as seven and nine years of age in Pakistan and India respectively, while in Switzerland, plaintiffs are making their case based on the disproportionate impact of climate change on senior women. UNEP News

Notable cases have challenged government decisions based on a project’s inconsistency with the goals of the Paris Agreement or a country’s net-zero commitments.

Growing awareness of climate change in recent years has also spurred action against corporations—these include cases seeking to hold fossil fuel companies and other greenhouse gas emitters responsible for climate harm.

According to the report, most ongoing climate litigation falls into one or more of six categories: 1) cases relying on human rights enshrined in international law and national constitutions; 2) challenges to domestic non-enforcement of climate-related laws and policies; 3) litigants seeking to keep fossil fuels in the ground; 4) advocates for greater climate disclosures and an end to greenwashing; 5) claims addressing corporate liability and responsibility for climate harms; and 6) claims addressing failures to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The report demonstrates how courts are finding strong human rights linkages to climate change. This is leading to greater protections for the most vulnerable groups in society, as well as increased accountability, transparency and justice, compelling governments and corporations to pursue more ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

In the future, the report predicts a rise in the number of cases dealing with climate migration, cases brought by indigenous peoples, local communities and other groups disproportionately affected by climate change, and cases addressing liability following extreme weather events. The report also anticipates challenges in applying the science of climate attribution as well as a rise in “backlash” cases against litigants which aim to dismantle regulations that promote climate action.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Intervene in ICJ climate change case, PH gov't urged](#)

By: Tina G. Santos

Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Marvic Leonen has called on the Philippine government to get involved in the pending International Court of Justice (ICJ) case on climate change.

“If we are to remain true to our advocacy for climate justice, being one of the states that stand to be most affected ... we need to intervene in this pending ICJ case for an advisory opinion on climate change,” Leonen said in a statement.

He also made the same call to the University of the Philippines (UP) community as he noted “the skills we have as lawyers and public rights advocates.”

Leonen challenged the UP community, including the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance and the UP College of Law, “to become the active public intellectuals that they are to provide our government with the needed draft for an intervention.

“You are well placed to craft an interdisciplinary pleading. You are well placed to organize and mobilize. Become the iskolar ng bayan that you are meant to be,” he said in his speech at a recent UP event where he was a guest speaker.

“Engage in issues surrounding the climate crisis and our democracy,” he told them.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted earlier this year a resolution requesting an advisory opinion from the ICJ regarding states’ obligations on climate change.

Consultations with UN officials further refined the draft into the present resolution, which later gained the support of other states.

According to Leonen, in the resolution, the ICJ was asked to give its opinion on the legal consequences of states’ “acts and omissions” which have affected the climate system.

He said that this was in the context of the injury that small island developing nations face due to the adverse effects of climate change.

Advisory opinion

The opinion from the ICJ is also supposed to refresh the commitment of states under international law to protect the climate system, he added.

The Philippines was among the nations that welcomed the initiative for the UN General Assembly to request an advisory opinion from the ICJ on the rights of present and future generations to be protected from the consequences of climate change.

In December last year, Ambassador Antonio Lagdameo, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, had expressed support for the initiative and concurred that climate change is indeed an “unprecedented challenge of civilizational proportions” that required a united effort led by the United Nations.

Leonen cited the climate crisis that the world is currently facing, especially in the Philippines.

“In the Philippines, communities are continuously ravaged by the detrimental effects of climate change. We are a nation whose geographical location has made us vulnerable to natural disasters. As an archipelago, we are often found in the path of typhoons and are prone to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis,” the high court official lamented.

“We are reliant on agriculture and fisheries, to which we must consider the impact of natural disasters both on the livelihoods of our farmers and fisherfolk, and on our own survival as a nation,” he said.

“Actual people have lost their livelihoods, homes, and loved ones because of the continuing climate crisis, and it is in their best interests that we must act on it before it is too late,” he added.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[DA reiterates call for climate-proof rice farming](#)

By: Sarwell Meniano

The Department of Agriculture (DA) regional office here has reiterated its call to rice farmers in Eastern Visayas to adapt to climate-resilient practices to solve output drop.

One of the practices that Eastern Visayas farmers should do is to plant early maturing, high-yielding and stress-tolerant rice seed varieties as excessive rain could happen and may affect pollination while typhoons may cause lodging or falling over.

“Our call to farmers is to seek fertilizer application recommendation from agricultural extension workers to avoid excessive application of fertilizer,” the DA said in a statement Friday.

Farmers were urged to get an indemnity crop insurance claim from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation before planting and using postharvest types of machinery to reduce wastage.

The DA said high exposure to the effects of climate change remains a major factor that negatively affects the region’s agricultural output and productivity.

Recurrent natural hazards make Eastern Visayas one of the most disaster-prone areas in the country.

Records showed that eight typhoons caused an estimated PHP1.50 billion in damage to agricultural products from 2017 to 2021.

The region also faces other climate disaster-related risks, including drought, landslides, soil degradation, water shortages in some areas, and increased pests and diseases.

Eastern Visayas is a predominantly farming region with 1.17 million hectares of land area dedicated to agriculture and fisheries or 54.55 percent of its total land area.

About 19 percent of the land or 219,936 hectares is for annual crops including rice.

In 2022, the region recorded 840,345 metric tons (mt) of palay (unhusked rice) harvest. Last year’s production was lower than the 864,373 mt yield in 2021.

POLITIKO

[Tree planting rule in building permits to mitigate climate change – Romualdez](#)

By: Billy Begas

The House of Representatives has approved on third and final reading a measure that would require a tree planting plan for residential, commercial, industrial, and public building development projects.

Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez said House Bill 8569, which was approved unanimously with 266 votes will help mitigate the effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

“In requiring a Tree Planting Plan (TPP) to secure building permits, we aim to enhance environmental quality, mitigate the effects of climate change and preserve the environment for present and future generations,” Romualdez said.

Under the bill, any person, firm, corporation, department, office, bureau, agency, or instrumentality of the government intending to construct, alter, repair, or convert any building or structure, is required to set aside, and properly maintain in said property, areas adequate for planting and maintaining trees and flora.

Section 4 of the measure gives preference to indigenous species of trees, taking into account the location, climate, and topography of the area. Planting non-vigorously growing endemic ornamental plants or trees and fruit-bearing trees is recommended for residential lots.

THE MANILA TIMES

Climate crisis changes decisions – study

A recent global study found 91 percent of parents are concerned about the climate crisis, leading to changes that reshape their lives and purchasing habits. More than half (53 percent) say it has impacted their perspective on having more children. The research also found many parents favor companies that are taking action to address climate change and expect businesses to lead on the issue. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of parents prefer products that are sustainably sourced, and 60 percent say sustainable company practices play a large part in their purchasing habits.

This willingness to seek out sustainable products and decisions comes despite the fact that the vast majority of respondents (84 percent) acknowledge the cost of living is rising and more than half (57 percent) believe engaging in environmentally friendly practices takes up a lot of time.

"We are seeing how climate change has transformed family life," noted Christian Reyes, managing director, Philippines, HP Inc., which provided the new global research to the media revealing the serious actions many parents are taking due to climate change, from everyday decisions to long-term family planning. "Parents now have a higher awareness of how decisions made within the home can impact their communities. HP wants to help Filipino families by creating opportunities that enable them to make more sustainable choices."

While parents are taking personal action, most also believe key players in the corporate world must act, too. Most parents surveyed globally (51 percent) believe that companies have "a lot" of responsibility for holding themselves accountable for climate action, as opposed to customers (36 percent).

The findings come as HP releases its 22nd annual Sustainable Impact report, detailing the company's progress toward comprehensive and bold environmental and social goals: HP has reduced its absolute carbon footprint by 18 percent since 2019. This brings the company closer to its goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2040 — end to end. It has also reduced single-use plastic packaging by 55 percent compared to 2018; counteracted deforestation for 41 percent of all paper used in HP products and services toward the goal of 100 percent; and accelerated digital equity for more than 21 million people on the path to 150 million by 2030.

Marcos: Work with youth for 'greener' future

By: Catherine S. Valente and Red Mendoza

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is urging Filipinos to work with the country's youth to secure a "greener future" for the Philippines, recognizing the role of the young generation in achieving sustainable development.

"We recognize the utmost importance of our young people's roles in developing, prioritizing and adopting ecological initiatives that must be aggressively pushed today to fully realize the healthier environment we all deserve," President Marcos said in his message on the occasion of International Youth Day 2023 on Saturday.

"May our love for the youth and Mother Earth be the guidepost as we commit to embark on a green transition. Together, let us embrace this social contract and move towards a future that efficiently, inclusively, and sustainably works for all," he pointed out.

Likewise, the President said that young Filipinos exude eagerness to evoke transformational movements that positively impact the current and coming generations.

This year's International Youth Day theme is "Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World."

In a video message, Marcos enumerated the laws he co-authored that helped uplift the country's youth, including Republic Act (RA) 8044, which created the National Youth Commission in 1995, and RA 10742, or the "SK Reform Law of 2015."

"With these two landmark laws for the Filipino youth, the National Youth Commission supervised the return of SK (Sangguniang Kabataan) leaders of our country in 2018," Marcos said.

"We are all partners in guiding, inspiring and leading the Filipino youth toward strengthening this Republic — to mobilize them during disasters and emergencies, countering rebel youth recruitment, to defend all our people and the Republic," he added.

Youth and sustainability

In observance of International Youth Day 2023, United Nations agencies in the Philippines, as well as the Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica), highlighted the important role of young people in society.

UN Philippines resident coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez said that while young people are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and other societal challenges, they are also the most innovative, resourceful and determined. Thus, we need to invest in them and make them more involved.

"We must give them the tools they need to be leaders in the fight against climate change and other social issues such as adolescent pregnancy that may hinder them from reaching their full potential. They need to be given the opportunity to actively shape their future," Gonzalez added.

He also underscored putting the Filipino youth at the front and center of its efforts and programs, noting that with their talent and potential, they are key to reaching sustainable growth and development, especially those in the 0-24 years age bracket, which together comprise nearly half, or 49.5 percent, of the Filipino population.

On the other hand, Koica Country Director Kim Eunsub said the agency is focusing its support in the field of maternal and child health through \$6.4 million funding for the acceleration of the reduction of adolescent pregnancy since 2022.

The program, implemented by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and the World Health Organization (WHO), aims to reduce adolescent pregnancy in the Philippines and ensure that girls will be able to stay in school and are able to achieve their full potential.

Partner agencies are working closely with the Departments of Health and Education, and the governors of Samar and Southern Leyte in rolling out adolescent-friendly mobile health facilities, building the capacity of community adolescent health service providers, accelerating the integration of comprehensive sexuality education in schools, implementing Youth Leadership and Governance Initiatives, and conducting research on Adolescent Pregnancy and Child, Early and Forced Marriage.

"This year's theme is a great reminder to encourage multisectoral convergence to strengthen climate resilience and equip the youth with green skills. Through this four-year joint project, I am hopeful that it can create a huge impact on achieving a better future for Filipino youth who are able to make better choices on their own sexual and reproductive health," Eunsub added.

UNFPA Philippines Country Representative Dr. Leila Joudane said that girls must not be excluded from the creation of green skills among the youth, and through their project

with Koica, it will ensure that more girls will be able to access opportunities and have better futures.

"Girls must be among the new generation of leaders building our sustainable future, as they are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change," Joudane added.

Unicef Philippine Representative Oyunsaikhan Dendevnorov maintained that addressing teenage pregnancies will contribute to ending the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

"Let's invest in improving the health and help-seeking behaviors of young people, especially girls," Dendevnorov added.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Intervene in International Court of Justice climate change case, government urged](#)

By: Neil Jayson Servallos

Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Marvic Leonen is calling on the government to intervene in the climate change case lodged before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), stressing the need to take action for communities in the country continuously facing the brunt of the climate crisis.

Speaking during the recognition rites of the University of the Philippines (UP) National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) held recently, Leonen said the government needs to throw its hat into the case, which has gained the support of many countries.

“If we are to remain true to our advocacy for climate justice, being one of the states that stand to be most affected, and also because of the skills we have as lawyers and public rights advocates, we need to intervene in this pending ICJ case for an advisory opinion on climate change,” he said.

Leonen said the ICJ has been asked to give its opinion on the legal consequences of “acts and omissions” of states that have affected the climate system.

Earlier this year, the United Nations general assembly adopted a resolution requesting an opinion from the ICJ regarding the obligations of states on climate changes. Consultations with UN officials led to the current case and the support of other states.

The case was triggered by the adverse effects of climate change experienced by small island nations. The forthcoming opinion of the ICJ is intended to reaffirm the commitment of states under international law to protect the climate system.

The government needs to support the case, considering how the Philippines is one of the many states facing the adverse effect of climate change, according to Leonen.

“We are a nation whose geographical location has made us vulnerable to natural disasters... We are reliant on agriculture and fisheries, to which we must consider the impact of natural disasters both on the livelihoods of our farmers and fisherfolk, and on our own survival as a nation,” he added.

Leonen also challenged the UP community, the NCPAG and the College of Law to be active “public intellectuals” by helping the government with the necessary draft for an intervention.

[Opinion] AI-aided forecasting

By: Marichu A. Villanueva

A geologist by training, Department of Science and Technology (DOST) head Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. supports the policy decision of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. (PBBM) to construct water-impounding structures as a science-based solution to flooding and as a climate change adaptation measure. In particular, Solidum believes the proposed water-impounding project at the Candaba swamp in Pampanga could mitigate the severe flooding and become an irrigation source in Central Luzon.

Solidum called upon to all national and local government officials to come to an agreement as soon as possible on the most effective “design” for the water-impounding project in the affected areas. In our Kapihan sa Manila Bay breakfast news forum last Wednesday, Solidum disclosed a research and development (R & D) study of the DOST supports the policy issue “to harmonize” any natural hazards and focus on effects of encroachment by human settlements around the riverbank areas.

In the two latest typhoons that hit Central Luzon one after the other, Solidum cited, rainfalls from both “Egay” and “Falcon” raised the water level around the Pampanga River Basin as high as 464.8 millimeters. Solidum noted this was more than its normal capacity of 375 millimeters high. Much higher than that, Solidum revealed, was the Clark River System that went up to as high as 833 millimeters. Compared to its capacity of 514.6 millimeters, this was 165 percent above normal, Solidum computed.

“Indeed, we should always think that the cause of flooding is there’s excess water from heavy rainfall,” Solidum pointed out. Solidum added this should be complemented by other solutions, including relocation of communities in areas with a chronic flooding problem.

Solidum recalled that while he was still at the Philippine Institute of Volcanology (Phivolcs) a policy decision was made “to sacrifice” an entire Porac River in Pampanga. This was to address the lahar flooding that continued cascading from Mt. Pinatubo years after its explosive eruption in June 1991. This justified the construction of a “mega-dike” as the long-term solution, the ex-PhiVolcs chief cited.

PBBM initially raised the idea of using 200 hectares of the Candaba swamp out of its total area of 2,000 hectares into a water-impounding structure. PBBM stressed the location of the water-impounding project would be dictated “by nature, not by politics.” This was after Pampanga Rep. Ana York Bondoc argued against it and threatened to

walk out of the briefing room. Bondoc pointed to farmers who she claimed would be displaced by the project.

Called as “Nanay” in Pampanga, Gov. Baby Pineda was seen trying to calm down Bondoc while the latter ranted against former Public Works and Highways Secretary Rogelio “Babes” Singson. Now the head of the Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC), Singson raised this proposal with PBBM during the situation briefing held at the provincial capitol in San Fernando City, Pampanga. Singson was among the resource persons in behalf of the MPTC that operates the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) where vehicles going in and out of Pampanga and Bulacan got stuck in flooded highways at the height of the onslaughts of the two typhoons.

Solidum was not among the Cabinet officials who joined the President during the dialogues on flood-mitigation measures. However, Solidum vouched for the water-impounding project as the most viable climate change adaption to the Central Luzon flooding problem. Aside from mitigating the floods, Solidum argued, the water retention facility will save accumulated rainfalls as a source of irrigation for nearby farms against drought due to the El Niño phenomenon, or the long dry period.

“We need to manage the water,” the DOST chief quipped.

Solidum offered the DOST services to check out the design of proposed water retention basins for its efficacy to manage heavy rain overflow.

A career public servant for more than 30 years, Solidum has not engaged in politics-driven solutions in addressing natural calamities and other geo-hazards all around the Philippines. Exactly a year ago, PBBM appointed Solidum to his Cabinet. Solidum originally wanted to become a civil engineer, but ended taking up Geology at the University of the Philippines. After he got his Ph.D. in Earth Science in Chicago, Illinois, he started his career in 1984 at PhiVolcs that was spun off from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

The PAGASA and PhiVolcs are among the 19 attached agencies of the DOST. PBBM has yet to name though up to now a permanent PAGASA Administrator. According to Solidum, veteran weather specialist Nathaniel Servando who returned to PAGASA is serving as officer-in-charge.

Pointing to the climate change phenomenon during the discussions on flooding with local officials in Bulacan, PBBM virtually questioned the reliability of PAGASA weather predictions when El Niño is supposedly prevailing in the Philippines.

Cracking a joke about it, PBBM chuckled: “I don’t think they heard the PAGASA forecast. So it poured so much waters.”

Levity aside, Solidum clarified the global warming has been affecting the weather systems all over the world, including the Philippines. From the eastern side, he cited, the trade winds from the Pacific Ocean carry no more water but the monsoon carries the rainwaters from the west.

Solidum quoted the latest PAGASA forecast that the El Niño period has yet to be fully felt but is expected to peak by the third quarter of this year and will supposedly last until the first quarter of 2024.

Demystifying the seeming contradictions of having an El Niño dry spell and the reality that it is also raining sporadically, the DOST chief admitted the need to improve their “science communications.” So that the media, the decision-makers in and out of the government, and the public in general will get to know it better, he conceded.

Better yet, he announced the DOST is preparing more data for artificial intelligence (AI)-aided forecasting, especially for disaster risk reduction preparations.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

THE MANILA TIMES

[UNDP, DENR boost EPR drive](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) teamed-up with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for a nationwide campaign that will drive the recovery of waste materials and prevent leakage of waste into the environment. The campaign is in line with the implementation of Republic Act (RA) 11898, otherwise known as the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022.

Dubbed as "Loopforward: Linking Opportunities and Partnerships Towards Circular Economy through EPR," the campaign aims for full compliance and effective implementation of the EPR Act of 2022 by industries and other entities through attainment of time-bound waste recovery targets. It highlights the relevance of the EPR concept and law, gain better understanding among its stakeholders, and convene and gain commitments from the country's biggest private firms referred to as the "obliged enterprises" under the law. It also seeks to gather support and open possible areas for collaboration among national government agencies, local government units, and development partners.

During the Loopforward launch, Senator Cynthia Villar, who pushed for the passage of the EPR Act, delivered her message of support while Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga was the keynote speaker. Meanwhile, Climate Change Commission Secretary Robert Borje and UNDP Philippines Resident Representative Selva Ramachandran delivered special remarks as well.

Among the highlights of the program were the talks on the social dimension of single-use plastic in the informal sector by Dr. Emma Porio of the Ateneo de Manila University, and another on climate financing by UNDP Climate Action Programme Team Leader Floradema Eleazar; as well as panel discussions on enabling EPR implementation by key officials from the Department of Finance, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Trade and Industry, with representatives from Holcim Philippines Inc., San Miguel Foods, Plastic Credit Exchange, Nestle Philippines Inc., Universal Robina Corporation, SM Prime Holdings Inc., Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability, and CEMEX Holdings Philippines.

Throughout the event, the DENR facilitated the onsite registration and submission from private companies of their respective EPR programs either as an Obligated Enterprise,

Collective or Producer Responsibility Organization. An exhibit on exemplary EPR programs from select enterprises and organizations was also featured.

POLITIKO

Wealthy nations must honor climate financing commitments: CCC

By: Prince Golez

Developed countries should honor their climate finance promise, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said.

In a recent plenary session at the Asian Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Resilience, Deputy Executive Director Romell Antonio Cuenca emphasized the role of partnerships and collaborations in mobilizing climate finance to advance climate justice.

He highlighted the Philippine government's initiatives in upscaling climate finance mechanisms to implement climate action on the ground.

"The delivery of climate finance is where we define climate justice. Developed countries have to deliver on their commitments, and these include ensuring that the processes in accessing financial mechanisms are streamlined and simplified, with high preference on grant-based resources," he said.

At the 15th Conference of Parties in 2009, richer countries pledged to provide 100-billion-U.S. dollar annual climate financing to help poorer countries cope with climate change.

Cuenca believes that stakeholders should come together in order to mobilize climate finance.

He cited CCC programs on climate finance as areas of collaboration, including the Climate Change Expenditure Tagging and People's Survival Fund, and access to international funding mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund.

The CCC also established coordination mechanisms with development partners, private sector, local government units, and civil society organizations geared towards accelerated, investment-led, and transformative climate actions, according to him.

"Let's work together and seek partnerships with technical and financial assistance providers to unlock financing support, which could help reduce losses and damages resulting from climate-related disasters," said Cuenca.

=END=